

Woodrock Youth Development Program

Brief Program Description

The Woodrock Youth Development Program (YDP) is a school-based substance abuse prevention program sponsored by Woodrock. YDP is designed to prevent or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, raise awareness about the dangers of use, improve self-esteem, school attendance, and attitudes toward racial and ethnic diversity, and reduce aggressive attitudes and behaviors among at-risk elementary and middle school minority youth. Programmatic goals are achieved by providing valuable extracurricular activities to engage youth, helping youth to develop general living and interpersonal skills, and imparting ATOD-related knowledge and refusal skills. YDP is conceptually grounded in evidence demonstrating the link between ethnic group norms and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and evaluation findings demonstrating the preventive effects of resistance and cultural competency training, peer mentoring, and family strengthening activities.

An experimental design was used to assess the impact of YDP. Despite strengths in the design and implementation of the evaluation, statistically significant improvements were evidenced for only half of the outcomes targeted. The absence of additional effects was attributed to insufficient intervention. Further research is needed to determine if increasing the frequency and duration of exposure to YDP program components will produce desired changes across outcomes targeted.

Program Strategies

The YDP program model comprises three intervention components: (1) education, including human relations and life-skills seminars in which role playing and other simulations relevant to drug-use situations are incorporated; (2) a program of structured alternative extracurricular activities both after school and on weekends; and (3) peer mediation.

Population Focus

YDP serves African American, Latino, Asian, and Caucasian youth ages 6 through 14. Program youth attend public schools located in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Suitable Settings

YDP can be implemented in urban elementary and middle school settings. YDP schools are located in economically depressed communities characterized by a high incidence of hate crimes, ethnic conflict, and drug trafficking.

Required Resources

The following materials are available from Woodrock:

- *Human Relations Curriculum* materials
- Evaluation materials include race relation and aggression inventories developed specifically for the program

Implementation Timeline

YDP features comprehensive and integrated services that are implemented over the course of the school year.

- Human relations curriculum: Classes intended to raise self-awareness about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, promote healthy attitudes about use and foster self-esteem are held weekly
- After school program: mediator's club, mural arts, outdoor activities
- Peer mediation program
- Overnights: students participate in team building and resiliency activities at a training center

Outcomes

Evaluation findings revealed that compared with control group youth, YDP participants evidenced significant improvements in:

- Decreased alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use within the last month
- Decreased lifetime alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use
- Race relations and cultural sensitivity
- School attendance

Additional gains were noted in aggression and self-esteem, however, observed changes were not statistically significant.

Note: Higher mean scores on measures of race relations and school attendance indicate improvement. Lower scores on measures of last year and last month use indicate improvement. Differences between posttest scores for the two groups were statistically significant at $p < .01$ for race relations, school attendance, and lifetime ATOD use. Corresponding effect sizes (d) were .22, .26, and .19 respectively. Differences in posttest scores for the two groups were statistically significant at $p < .05$ for prior month drug use ($d = .18$).

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

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